2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

food and drink. Traditionally, it is the child's grandfather who announces his name, simply and without ceremonial. But today the ceremonial has been widely remodelled in Mohammedan fashion, the announcement now falling to a mallam among the invited guests. The child's grandfather merely whispers the name to the mallam, who will then offer up prayers, in the usual mixture of crude Arabic and Hausa, and invoke divine blessing upon the new-born. It would seem that this innovation preserves the specifically religious aspect of the ceremony while shifting it from the preamble, the ancestral sacrifice (which is omitted in the strictly Mohammedan version), to the public announcement. But since a great many families still observe both the pagan sacrifice and the prayer of mallams, the religious emphasis is doubled. And this, too, seems fully warranted. For the public ceremony, at least, in the lavish style to be presently described, with singing and dancing, is itself an innovation, originating in Bida and among the wealthier classes of the capital. This festivity might well obscure the religious connotation of the naming ceremony; so that the doubling of the religious emphasis preserves the balance and hence the aspect of solemnization.

In the next and last phase of the *suna* this aspect once more disappears, giving way to purely secular interests. The infant is now brought outside, leaving the mother's hut for the first time, to be exhibited to the assembled guests. It is carried by the paternal grandmother, who also holds it when, presently, barbers will cut its hair and scratch the tribal marks on its cheeks and forehead. Traditionally, a male child's head should be shaved completely, while in the case of a girl the hair on the top of the head is left standing; this, incidentally, is the only feature in the *suna* ceremonial which varies with the sex of the child. Today, however, it is the fashion, especially in Bida, to cut the hair of boys *à la* mallam, that is, to leave a tuft of hair in the middle of the head as pious mallams do. The hair which has been shaved off is treated with some care; it is collected in a bowl and later buried inside the house, though there is no notion of evil consequences if these precautions were neglected. The facial operation is sometimes postponed for several days if the infant is too weak to stand it at once. To the observer, indeed, its cruelty seems the outstanding feature: the babe cries and squeals, and blood is running all over its face and body. The crowd, however, hardly takes notice, eating, drinking and chatting as before. The barbers perform the operation in a businesslike manner and leave as soon as they have finished, had some food, and received their fee. In wealthy households several barbers will be called in, though one man is quite sufficient for the job, and the father will try to secure the services

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

their lives rather than at any other, and with so little formality. The people can offer no explanation save the non-committal 'it is the custom'. It is, then, a custom whose general 'content' of aims seems clear, but whose particular 'form' appears arbitrary if not ill-chosen.

(ii) *Marriage*

Including all the various preliminaries, the wedding ceremonial is a long drawn-out affair, occupying twelve days, divided into three phases of four days. It begins when the bride puts on (or 'enters') the veil, which she will put aside only on the twelfth day, after the consummation. Even afterwards she will continue to wear the veil whenever she leaves the house or meets strangers (for another month in the villages, for three months in Bida), but may remain unveiled in the company of her husband and relations. During the first four days the bride's house is the centre of activities. The bride will bathe, stain hands and feet with henna, and don her wedding dress. Thus attired she and her family will receive visitors, and the bride's young female companions will sing and clap hands, the typical accompaniment of girls' songs and dances. The feast reaches its climax on the fourth day, when professional drummers and musicians are hired for the occasion and the bride's father offers food and drink to numerous guests.

Among them will be two envoys of the bridegroom, his brother and his best friend, who have come to accompany the bride to her future home. Among the pagans, the two men also attend the sacrifice performed by the bride's father on that day. This sacrifice (of beer and a cock) is intended for the *kuci* and is performed privately at the usual place for family sacrifices—over an ancestral grave, a twin shrine, or in front of an hereditary *cigbe*. The bride's father briefly invokes *Sokó*, asking for a prosperous marriage, blessed with children. Among Mohammedans, the religious rite involves the presence of a mallam, and every family will try to secure the offices of a famous one. The mallam, in front of all the guests, will announce the marriage, offer up prayers for bride and bridegroom, and recite the names and titles of their fathers and grandfathers as well as (having been carefully primed) the details of the brideprice and dowry. In the Mohammedan version a public ceremonial thus again replaces the private sacrifice, and secular ostentation is mingled with the religious rite. Let us note that in Mohammedan practice this solemn announcement of the marriage also establishes, formally and legally, the marriage bond, the episode being in fact referred to as *pá yawó*, 'tying the marriage'; while the pagan ceremonial replaces this precise, single act by a more circuitous procedure, of which the sacrifice to the *kuci* is the first step.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

765 sacrifice, and another big feast takes place, which lasts two days but otherwise duplicates the celebration of the Eight Days.

The widows may now leave the compound and go into the town, though they may do so only at dark, when they cannot be recognized. The prohibition to wash or to change their clothes remains in force for another four months, and not until then may the widows begin to think about re-marriage. The final funerary rite is once more a copy of the previous feasts, save that all present will now [302] wear their best and most festive clothes. The widows especially, if they are still young, will stain their hands and feet with henna and their eyes with antimony, prospective brides even in appearance. For if the question of re-marriage arises, the feast of the Hundred-Twenty Days also serves as an occasion for the family council at which this prospect is discussed and decided. Four months after a man's death, the Nupe argue, a pregnancy for which he was responsible must be noticeable. If so, the widow may not re-marry until the child is born and old enough to be left; the child, called *dzangi*, 'parting-gift child', would then belong to the father's family and stay with it. If the widow is not pregnant at the time (noticeably so, that is), she is free to re-marry, and even if she does not, any child she may subsequently give birth to will be disclaimed by the late husband's family.

764 184 It now remains to compare the traditional ceremonial with the modern Mohammedan version. The *goro* grave-diggers, as we know, are replaced by mallams, whose work and religious ministrations are surrounded by no secrecy. Nor are these restricted to the death of old people. They now consist in brief prayers, spoken or read in the presence of all the men of the house (women being excluded), both before the body is interred and again before the grave is closed. When the mallams later join the mourners they will continue to murmur prayers, rosary in hand. At the death of an important man, when the grave hut cannot hold all the mourners, the main prayers are said in the roomy entrance hut, and the body will be brought there for the service before being interred. On such occasions mallams of highest standing will officiate, the *Alkali* or *Liman* leading the prayers, and these are interspersed with passages of impromptu praise and eulogy. On such occasions, too, the men among the guests will wear, not the simple dress of mourning, but rich gowns meant to display their rank and position. The mallams are offered food and given a sum of money, only part of which is a payment for their services; the rest is intended as a pious offering, for distribution among all the mallams of the town. It is extremely shameful to give too little, and families will borrow money or pawn their belongings rather than risk dismissing the mallams with a gift that might be considered shabby; so that the